

Japan Christian Activity News

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JOINT ROMAN CATHOLIC-PROTESTANT ANTI-NUCLEAR PRAYER SERVICE AND DEMONSTRATION

A joint prayer service for peace and a nuclear-free future was held at 4:00 PM on Pentecost Sunday, May 30, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Tokyo under the sponsorship of the National Christian Council of Japan and the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace. An atmosphere of spiritual unity like the first Pentecost was felt by many of the over 1000 persons who filled the large hall.

The meeting started with songs by young people appealing for a nuclear-free future. Rev. Felix K. YAOCH, S.J., from the island Republic of Belau, who helped draft that country's constitution making it a nuclear-free nation, spoke on the nuclear problems being faced by his people. He pointed out that the Pacific was the battle-ground for powerful nations during World War II. He stressed that even before the islands had had time to recover from the wounds of war, their land began to be subjected to

nuclear bomb testing and nuclear waste disposal. In response to assurances given by the Japanese government for the safety of its plan to dispose of nuclear wastes in the Pacific, Fr. Yaoch asked, "Why, then, if the wastes are so safe, are they disposed of in our part of the Pacific Ocean instead of in Tokyo Bay?"

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"Must we," Fr. Yaoch continued, "be sacrificed in order to satisfy the desires of powerful nations? On the Day of Pentecost the disciples were filled with love and started to act for peace. We today must do the same. In our meeting here all people are breaking boundaries of religious, racial, economic and political differences. I see hope in this meeting where you are trying to listen to the voices of small minorities. It is important to strengthen the nuclear-free zone and seek the realization of peace, justice and happiness for all."

Prof. ICHIKAWA Sadao, Saitama Prefectural University Genetics professor, pointed out that the myth of the safety of the peaceful use of atomic power has been demolished by various events in the past few years. He also warned of the effects of low level radiation escaping from the 24 nuclear reactors in Japan. From his research in genetic changes in the Spiderwort plant, Ichikawa explained some of the differences between human-made radiation and natural radiation in the environment. He pointed out that natural radiation passes through the body but the human-made radiation related to atomic energy accumulates within the body and has a cumulative effect.

In commenting on the additional dangers of human-produced radiation, he pointed out that humanity today evolved through periods that experienced natural radiation. Since the human-produced radiation was not a factor in that evolution process, its long-time results are unpredictable.

However, he pointed out that the mutation problems caused by radiation are not a matter of just individual concern, genetic changes become part of the whole genetic inheritance of future generations.

Ichikawa also commented that minorities bear proportionately a larger burden of suffering and exposure to the dangers of nuclear production. Aboriginal people find their lives and communities disrupted as their lands become sites of uranium mining. It is reported that immigrants work in large numbers in the nuclear re-processing plants in France and England. The Pacific Ocean will be the dumping ground for nuclear wastes.

Mr. YUKIMUNE Hajime, a victim of the Hiroshima bombing, spoke on behalf of radiation victims as he called for opposing all nuclear weapons.

Rev. LEE In Ha, Chairperson of the NCC-J, and a Korean Christian Church in Japan pastor led the worship service, preaching on the group to become peacemakers. Quoting Amos 5:24, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream," Lee pointed out that voices from all over the world are calling for the realization of world peace (shalom). He appealed to the group to widen the circle of those working for the realization of peace.

The many messages from various churches and councils around the world demonstrated the strong international support for the May 30 Peace Movement. In addition, many non-Japanese living in the Tokyo area participated in the service.

An appeal for action to bring "shalom" to the earth was adopted. The program concluded with a candlelight march to Mejiro Station with placards held high calling for a nuclear-free future.

(AYC)



PHOTOGRAPHS by Mr. KOYAMA Kiwao

RS. SEKIYA, NCC-J VICE-CHAIRPERSON VISITS PHILIPPINE NCC

Mrs. SEKIYA Ayako, Vice-Chairperson of the National Christian Council of Japan, visited the National Council of Churches of the Philippines May 24-26, to strengthen solidarity with struggling Christians in the Philippines. She visited Violeta ARASIGAN, NCC-P Secretary for Family Ministry, and many others who are detained in the Camp Crame stockade (see JCAN 83). Since 1979, when an international consultation organized by the Resource Center for Philippine Concerns was held in Tokyo, cooperative relations between the National Councils of the Philippines and Japan have increased.

Rev. LaVerne MERCADO, General Secretary of the NCC-P, was invited to be keynote speaker of the 28th General Assembly meeting of the NCC-J in Tokyo in March 1982. However, when three members of the NCC-P staff along with twenty other persons were arrested in the period from February 26 through March 1, Mr. Mercado, believing he must not leave the Philippines at so critical a time, cancelled his plans to address the NCC-J meeting.

The NCC-J General Assembly sent telegrams to the NCC-P indicating support by Christians in Japan for the NCC-P work and to Philippine President Marcos appealing for the release of the detainees.

The April meeting of the Central Committee of the NCC-J voted to send Mrs. Sekiya to the Philippines. During her short stay she attended Fr. Edicio de la Torre's court hearing in Manila where de la Torre was defended by former Senator Diokno. Mr. Diokno forcefully accused the authorities of unjustly arresting Fr. de la Torre and of confining him even though martial law had been lifted. (Mrs. Sekiya reported that the judge in the case himself seemed uneasy.)

Mrs. Sekiya also met Laura OCAMPO who had just been released from the Camp Crame stockade. Mrs. Ocampo explained that immediately after her arrest she was not allowed the right to remain silent. Each day, for several days, she was tortured from early morning till late in the night as accusations were made against her. Mrs. Sekiya stressed that despite their suffering, the hope and brightness shown by the detainees was remarkable.

Mrs. Sekiya reported that NCC-P General Secretary Mercado affirmed, "The pain and struggle of the churches in the Philippines is not in vain nor do we feel isolated. We are encouraged by the many prayers from other churches in the world --especially by the concern shown by people in Japan."

by KANZAKI Yuji

CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO ASIAN ISSUES INAUGURAL LECTURES

Over 150 persons attended the inaugural meeting of the newly established Center for Christian Response to Asian Issues (CCRAI) June 5 at the Japan Christian Center. The start of the Center was discussed and unanimously approved at the NCC-J General Assembly in March with work starting April of this year.

The June 5 meeting was held primarily to clarify and affirm the purpose and direction of the Center. The primary task of the Center is to generate interest and awareness with regard to the issues and problems people in Asia face and to formulate programs of Christian response to the issues among churches in Japan. Thus, the main theme of the June 5 meeting was "Challenging Japan in Asia."

At the outset of the meeting, Dr. LEE In Ha, representing NCC-J, warned the Japanese people in general and Christians in particular by quoting Rev. Harry DANIEL who stated at the previous NCC-J Assembly, "Asia does not need Japan, but Japan needs Asia for its survival." Dr. Lee then said that the Center was born in the midst of criticisms and in response to expectations from our friends in Asia. Lee expressed appreciation of the fact that the churches in Japan have finally decided to tackle Asian issues systematically and seriously.

Following this, Prof. SUMIYA Mikio, director of the CCRAI, made a clear-cut proposition with regard to the role of the Center within the churches in Japan. Prof. Sumiya pointed out that the concern for Asia among the Japanese Christians and Japanese people in general, has been rather weak. Therefore, Sumiya continued, the center should pay much closer attention to the voices of the suffering people in Asia and try to serve the churches in

Asia providing accurate information in Japan.

The first guest lecturer was Rev. Harry DANIEL of India who spoke on "The Asian Context and Christian Struggle." He analysed the Asian context in terms of "aggressor" and "victim" and suggested three areas of concern for serious study and research: "Peace and Disarmament," "Economic and Social Justice," "Human dignity and Freedom." He then concluded the speech by encouraging Japanese Christians and those who initiated the CCRAI saying, "Being Asians, you have the possibilities to search for and contribute to the search for Asian idioms of thinking and action, that can have some clearer vision of the future and see ways of moving towards it....God bless the CCRAI as the Christian response of Japanese churches to Asian issues."

Another invited guest speaker, Prof. CHI Myung Kwan, explored the possibility of an Asian theology which he sees as inseparable from the suffering and experiences of the vast majority of Asian people who are basically non-Christian. Prof. Chi's challenge was quite stimulating to those concerned about Asian issues but who tend not to question the affluent "peace" that is prevalent in our Japanese society. Prof. Chi's theological search is also a big challenge to the theological stance held by many Japanese churches as well as theological education institutions.

At the meeting the second issue of the Center's monthly news bulletin called "Asia Tsushin" was distributed. The Center hopes to publish the news bulletin in order to keep the churches in Japan well informed about the situation in Asia and the work of the churches and Christians in Asia.

by KURATA Masahiko

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN MISSION COOPERATION PROPOSED

One aspect of world mission in the past was to transmit the culture of the "advanced nations" to the non-Christian countries, frequently resulting in evangelization efforts coming with colonial penetration.

This meant that often the goodwill of the missionaries was used to aid the colonial invaders. The United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) was not an exception since it served the interest of Japan's imperial militarism in Asia.

In view of the above, mission today must move beyond national interest concerns to cooperation in ecumenical mission among churches at the global level in relation to peace, poverty, and environmental destruction.

In this new understanding, the role of missionaries includes learning the issues and struggles of the receiving church and sending back information to the sending churches. Participating in the program of the church will enable missionaries to enter into dialogue with colleagues and help create wider views on the mission of the church. The ideal is to develop joint learning and study relationships.

Now is the time to change the past trend of receiving missionaries primarily from North America and Europe. Present Kyodan-related missionary statistics reveal that there are 208 missionaries from the US, 19 from Canada, 2 from Britain, 10 from West Germany, 4 from Taiwan and 1 from Korea. These statistics indicate that the Kyodan seems to lack the will to learn from Asian churches. Often we of the Kyodan think of missionaries as people who can work without our having to use part of our church offering to support that work. This suggests that our enthusiasm for receiving missionaries is weak.

Presently the Kyodan sends 10 missionaries to the US, 5 to South America, 5 to Canada, 2 to West German, and 6 to other Asian countries. But the Kyodan, at the most, pays only 25% of these person's expenses. I suggest that we have a goal of sending at least one missionary from each district (Kyoku) of the Kyodan and receiving at least one in each district.

*by TSUJI Ken, Kyodan Pastor
and Secretary of the Kyodan
General Assembly.*

[Taken from Kyodan Shimpo (Kyodan Times)
May 29, 1982.]



NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE vs. MRS. NAKAYA ----COURT DECISION APPEALED

Mrs. NAKAYA Yasuko has been fighting as a Christian woman in the courts against Japan's National Defense Force (NDF) ever since her deceased husband was enshrined in the Gokoku Shinto Shrine in the city of Yamaguchi 10 years ago. Mrs. Nakaya has been opposing the enshrinement of her husband on the grounds that enshrinement of NDF members in the "Protect-Our-Nation Shinto Shrine" without consultation is unconstitutional. The Japanese Constitution calls for separation of religion and state.

On June 1, the Hiroshima Higher Court, upon appeal by the NDF, affirmed an earlier decision of the Yamaguchi District Court that the enshrinement of her husband was unconstitutional. However, neither court ordered the removal of her husband's name from the list of the enshrined.

"The National Defense Force's effort to glorify my husband's death is part of their plan to convince the Japanese that the military dead are national heroes," Mrs. Nakaya says. It is the NDF's practice to enshrine any NDF person who dies in line of duty. Her husband was killed in a traffic accident.

Upon her return home from the Hiroshima Higher Court, Mrs. Nakaya felt herself under seige because of the many threatening letters and nuisance phone calls at all hours. She was accused of being "hikokumin"--non-Japanese--a particularly strong accusation used during World War II against those accused of not giving all-out support to the war effort.

Regarding the letters, Mrs. Nakaya commented, "The common point in the letters is that a person who holds ideas different from the majority is not a Japanese. It was that way during the war. For that reason I responded instinctively against the NDF enshrinement of my husband. Since I am a member of the Shin'ai Kyodan Church the pastor and fellow members supported me in bringing this suit though sometimes I have prayed asking God why he was forcing me into this difficult court case. Friends have encouraged me to persevere, saying that the issues are larger than just one individual's personal concerns."

Through the court struggle Mrs. Nakaya has learned that individuals must speak out for peace, particularly in the light of Japan's invasion of other Asian countries in the not too distant past. She maintains that the enshrinement of the war dead as military heroes comes out of the Japanese mentality which also continues to discriminate against women and the group of outcast-Japanese (buraku min).

Mrs. Nakaya's struggle continues since the National Defense Force has appealed the case to the Supreme Court.

(From June 16, Asahi Shimbun (Newspaper))

DISABLED MISSIONARY WELCOMED

About 40 people gathered on June 11 at the Japan Christian Center in Tokyo to welcome Rev. William and Laura Barndt and their son Van who will be participating as missionaries in the Asian Rural Institute in Nishinasuno, Tochigi Prefecture. Van, 31 years of age, is the first Downs syndrome person to serve as a missionary in Japan. The meeting in Tokyo was sponsored by Kitashiku (North Tokyo Sub-District of the Tokyo District of the Kyodan).

Both Christian and non-Christian persons with a variety of disabilities participated in the meeting. Parents of children with Downs syndrome were especially surprised and encouraged by the Barndt's presence in Japan and Van was delighted to recognize Japanese friends he had made two years earlier at a camp in Columbus, Ohio.

It is hoped that a series of small group meetings for parents of disabled children will result from this beginning.

(See the following article.)

MY FRIEND, VAN

Last summer I participated in the Joshi Gakuin Junior High School program at Gotemba, Shizuoka Prefecture. One day of the five-day program was spent visiting an institution for the disabled. The facility, located right in front of the gate of the National Defense Force installation, was built in the post-war

period for mentally disabled people.

We worked in the morning pulling weeds around the building, and in the afternoon we had a fellowship time in the gym. When I entered the gym a little late, our Junior High School students were singing and the others were sitting on the floor. The "conductor," a person with Downs syndrome, reminded me of a friend, Van Barndt, who also has Downs syndrome. Van, in the same way as the "conductor" at Gotemba, happily moves his arms in time with the music.

The NCC-J's Task Force of the Handicapped and the Church sent delegates to Canada and the USA in June and July, 1980. I joined the team which visited the International Handicapped People's camp near Columbus, Ohio, USA. After two days home-stay we went to the camp site.

I met Van and his father, who is a very good song director, at this camp. I felt close to Van since most Downs syndrome people are similar in some ways. Mr. Omori who accompanied me, gave Van a top. Later I wrote the following poem.

Spin

Let's spin the top
Which was carried from Japan,
Here in the camp
Among the trees in Ohio,
Van!
Together, let's spin the top.

Let's spin the five-colored top
Carried by plane
Crossing the sky from far, far away.

The top from Japan
Spinning on the dining room floor
At high noon.
Silently flying in place,
The spinning axis of the top
Points down through the earth
Uniting now with the far side of
the globe.

Van did not join the meetings, but whenever I saw Van, he was writing something in his notebook and his Bible was always beside him.

I, in a wheel-chair, had a chance to meet him often. My room was across the hall from Van's, where he slept in the top bunk and his father in the bottom bunk. I said, "One and two are?" He said, "Three." It

was such a simple conversation, but I felt that he responded to me earnestly, even though my broken English was only arrange words. Since I could not speak his country's language, my language handicap became a bridge between us.

We enjoyed a campfire in a nearby field on the second day of the program. When the firewood burst into flame a joyous chorus sprang up around the fire. At that time Van happily started conducting the music with a pencil for a baton.

Two years later, I felt the presence of Van at the workcamp in Gotemba at the foot of Mt. Fuji.

by SHIMAZAKI Mitsunasa

(Translation from the August 15, 1981, "Nakama", monthly publication of the Lutheran Hour.)

FOLLOWING JESUS, THE LIFE OF LOUIS GRIER

(The death of Rev. Louis Grier on June 1 came as a shock to all who knew him. Louis and his wife Dorothy came to Japan in 1948 as United Presbyterian Church missionaries working with the Kyodan. The following was written by Mrs. Grier for the Kyodan Buraku Liberation Center News. Mr. Grier served as a Kyodan missionary with the Buraku Liberation Center.)

What is it like to be a follower of Jesus? What is it like to be a believer in Christ? Has anyone asked you if you are following Christ? Jesus was always asking individuals to follow him. He asked for belief also. Belief came first and then he asked us to follow him.

We are always confronted with questions of our belief. Do we believe in God-- Father, Son and Spirit? Do we believe in the truth of the Scriptures? Do we believe in the Confession of our Church? Do we believe in the unity and purity of our Church? Do we really believe in Christ? These questions are not so difficult to answer and during the course of our life we each affirm our faith many times.

But what can we answer when we are asked, "Are we following Christ in our life--

style, our attitudes, our values and our surrender to Christ?

Louis Grier knew that belief itself is a part of Jesus and a part of each Christian's history. Our beloved repetitions of faith accompany or follow our individual experience with Christ but they do not replace an experience with Christ. Louis Grier wanted to follow Jesus in our own day. Not to imitate, not to live Christ's history, not to love Christ's enemies, not to confine himself to the signs of the Kingdom of those days. He wanted to situate himself in today's world, to love the enemies of today, to live with today's signs of the Kingdom. He believed in Christ and he believed like Christ and thus he was able to follow.

We say that believing and following belong together and cannot be separated. In theory, this is true. In practice, however, Louis Grier separated these two acts, took his belief out into the world of today and created an experience of following Jesus. We can believe without following, but we cannot follow without believing. He was a follower of Jesus.

by Dorothy Grier

(The January, 1980, issue of JCAN has a translation on "Buraku Discrimination" done by Louis Grier.)

KOBE MISSIONARY INDICTED PROTESTING ALIEN REGISTRATION LAW

Rev. Ronald Fujiyoshi, U.S. missionary working with the Korean Christian Church in Japan, was indicted June 16 by the Kobe Public Prosecutor's Office for violating the law that requires that aliens be fingerprinted when they secure their alien registration certificate if they expect to be in Japan over one year.

Fujiyoshi refused to be fingerprinted Nov. 9, 1981, when he applied for a new alien registration certificate.

The refusal to be fingerprinted was a means of protesting the fact that only criminals and aliens are required to be fingerprinted in Japan. Many see fingerprinting as a procedure related to criminal control. He maintains that since fingerprinting is not required of Japanese, the very process infringes on his human rights.

His refusal to be fingerprinted is also a means of protesting infringement on the human rights of Koreans and other Asians who though they are long term residents in Japan must still submit to being fingerprinted.

The date of the trial was not known at press time.

BOAT PEOPLE & JAPANESE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The 1951 United Nation's Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 U.N. Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees became effective in Japan, January 1, 1982.

Government statistics on refugees indicate that there are 1,782 Indo-Chinese "boat people" and about 1,800 refugees from other countries presently in Japan. Over 450 persons have requested refugees status in Japan but the Japanese government hold all requests as "pending." This means that although these refugees have indicated their desire to remain in Japan, their futures are uncertain. A visa renewal is required each year. Medical care and all other expenses are covered by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, not by the Japanese government. There are now 27 refugee institutions in Japan operated by the Red Cross, CARITAS (Roman Catholic), Tenrikyo, and Risshokosei Kai.

The following are Indo-Chinese Refugee statistics as of May 31, 1982.

| Year | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | Total |
|---|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Ship arrivals (times) | 9 | 11 | 25 | 22 | 33 | 32 | 39 | 9 | 180 |
| Persons arriving | 126 | 247 | 833 | 712 | 1,165 | 1,278 | 1,026 | 437 | 5824 |
| Births | 3 | 9 | 19 | 27 | 58 | 56 | 26 | 1 | 199 |
| Persons leaving | 129 | 255 | 848 | 684 | 1,074 | 754 | 323 | | 4067 |
| Deaths | | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | 9 |
| Temporarily re-settlement | | | 3 | 3 | 53 | 56 | 50 | | 165 |
| Awaiting Decision from Government concerned | 0 | 0 | 1 | 51 | 93 | 521 | 678 | 438 | 1782 |

ASIAN HEALTH INSTITUTE DEDICATES NEW FACILITY NEAR NAGOYA

Over 100 persons met on June 19 at the Asian Health Institute near Nagoya to celebrate the completion of its new three-story building which will house classrooms, a library, audio-visual facilities, offices and dormitory space for 10 students. The new facility is next to the recently completed Aichi International Hospital.

Recognizing that for various response the sending of medical personal to aid in Christian medical mission in other countries in Asia is not the best procedure for health care delivery, A.H.I.'s health education program is designed to give special training to community based health leaders for those communities. At A.H.I. these persons are equipped to aid in the raising level of the skills of health workers who will be working primarily in the rural and slum areas of Asia. Non-Asian participants are also accepted.

Creative co-operation between individuals and organizations from both the Roman Catholic and Protestant communities and support from "non-religious" persons made possible the completion of the facilities one year ahead of schedule.

Part of the support of the operating budget for A.H.I. comes from about 1,900 individuals who agree to make regular contributions to A.H.I. on their birthdays each year. The first full class of trainees will be entering in September, 1982.

Additional information about A.H.I. is available from: Mr. YAMASHITA Masa, A.H.I. 987-31 Minamiyama, Komenoki, Nisshin-cho, Aichi-gun, Aichi-ken, Japan 470-01. (R)

WCTU AND ANTIPROSTITUTION LEGISLATION

Japan's Prostitution Prevention Law was passed in May, 1956. At that time the owners of the red light district businesses exerted pressure on the government to prevent passage of the law and also to delay the implementation of the law. Political scandals were reported in relation to the passage of the law and as attempts were made to postpone enforcement of the law.

The 70 year history of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Japan (WCTU-J)
(continued to middle of next column)

THE NCC-J CENTRAL COMMITTEE on April 22, 1982 adopted a statement on "Japanese Male Prostitution Tourism." Prostitution tours are seen as negating the human dignity of women in other Asian countries and an exploitation. Such acts are in violation of our wish to live together as brothers and sisters with other Asian people.

The statement calls for the following action by member churches and organizations.

1. Deepen understanding of causes and problems of tourism and prostitution, and participate in movements which oppose such dehumanizing acts in other countries by Japanese men.
2. Oppose tourist agents that arrange such tours, and publicize the names of large cooperation that give such tours as "renwards" to employees for good and faithful service.
3. Oppose bringing foreigners to Japan to work as prostitutes.

reveals a history of working for the passage of an antiprostitution law and describes efforts to secure enforcement of the law at the local level.

The present law has been emptied of meaning in many different ways. One example is the fact that red light districts are still in business using different names such as "Private-Room-Bath-Houses."

There are presently over 16,000 of these "Private-Room-Bath-Houses" with over 20,000 women registered as employed in these businesses. The Women's Protection Agency, the agency responsible for enforcing the antiprostitution law, has such a small number of employees that it is not able to do an effective job of law enforcement. Despite not being able to do a good job of law enforcement because of a small staff, the Women's Protection Agency is having its budget reduced by budget-makers.

by TAKAHASHI Kikue
WCTU

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